

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed October 6, 2004. Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1, 4 – 6, 9 – 11, 14 – 16, 19 – 21, 24 – 27 and 30 - 32 remain pending. In particular, Applicant has amended claims 1, 6, 11, 16, 21 and 27, and has canceled claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28 and 29 without waiver, disclaimer or prejudice. Applicant has canceled claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28 and 29 merely to reduce the number of disputed issues and to facilitate early allowance and issuance of other claims in the present application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in a continuing application, if Applicant so chooses, and does not intend to dedicate the canceled subject matter to the public. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

The Office Action indicates that claims 1-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Godfrey* (U.S. Patent 6,839,604) in view of *Hu* (U.S. Patent 6,314,379). With respect to claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28 and 29, Applicant has canceled these claims and respectfully asserts that the rejection as to these claims has been rendered moot. With respect to the remaining claims, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Turning first to *Godfrey*, Applicant respectfully asserts that *Godfrey* does not teach or reasonably suggest the features/limitations attributed in the Office Action to *Godfrey*. Specifically, *Godfrey* fails to disclose, suggest, or teach performing of a recovery measure on the goods if a fail message is received.

In this regard, column 9, lines 43-46 of *Godfrey* discloses:

The process is repeated 366 at the same or different manufacturing sites which may, or may not, be distant from the first manufacturing site, until reader Rn validates 367 the entire process in a final compliance check. If the system is not satisfied that all of the operations have been successfully carried out then the blister pack is rejected 368.

However, *Godfrey* does not disclose any procedure for the rejected object. *Hu* does not remedy this deficiency.

With respect to the pending claims, claim 1 has been amended to recite:

1. A quality assurance system, comprising:
 - a service provider having at least a first process stage, to perform a process on goods being manufactured at the first process stage, transfer engineering data corresponding to the goods after the process, and hold the goods at the first process stage; and
 - a control center coupled to the service provider via Internet to receive the engineering data, compare the engineering data with a standard specification for confirming quality of the goods, transfer a confirmation message to the service provider if the engineering data conforms to the standard specification, and transfer a fail message to the service provider if the engineering data does not conform to the standard specification,such that ***the service provider releases the goods for further operations after the confirmation message is received and performs a recovery measure on the goods if the fail message is received.***

(*Emphasis Added*).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or reasonably suggest at least the features/limitations emphasized above in claim 1. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Insofar as claims 4 and 5 are dependent claims that incorporate the features of claim1, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other features that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 6, that claim has been amended to recite:

6. A quality assurance method for use between a service provider and a control center, comprising the steps of:
 - performing of a process on goods being manufactured at a first process stage by the service provider;
 - transferring of engineering data corresponding to the goods after the process to the control center via Internet, and holding of the goods at the first process stage by the service provider;
 - comparison of the engineering data with a standard specification for confirming quality of the goods by the control center;
 - transferring of a confirmation message to the service provider via the Internet by the control center if the engineering data conforms to the standard specification;
 - transferring of a fail message to the service provider by the control center if the engineering data does not conform to the standard specification;
 - release of the goods for further operations by the service provider after the confirmation message is received; and
 - performing of a recovery measure on the goods by the service provider if the fail message is received.***

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or reasonably suggest at least the features/limitations emphasized above in claim 6. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 6 is in condition for allowance. Insofar as claims 9 and 10 are dependent claims that incorporate the features of claim 6, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other features that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 11, that claim has been amended to recite:

11. A quality assurance system, comprising:
 - a service provider having a sequence of process stages and a quality assurance stage, to perform a plurality of processes on goods being

manufactured at the process stages, transfer engineering data corresponding to the goods after the processes, and hold the goods at the quality assurance; and
a control center coupled to the service provider via Internet to receive the engineering data, compare the engineering data with a standard specification, transfer a confirmation message to the service provider if the engineering data conforms to the standard specification, and transfer a fail message to the service provider if the engineering data does not conform to the standard specification,
such that ***the service provider ships the goods after the confirmation message is received and performs a recovery measure on the goods if the fail message is received.***

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or reasonably suggest at least the features/limitations emphasized above in claim 11. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 11 is in condition for allowance. Insofar as claims 14 and 15 are dependent claims that incorporate the features of claim 11, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other features that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 16, that claim has been amended to recite:

16. A quality assurance method for use between a service provider and a control center, in which the service provider has a sequence of process stages and a quality assurance stage, comprising the steps of:
 - performing of a plurality of processes on goods being manufactured at the process stages by the service provider;
 - transferring of engineering data corresponding to the goods after the processes to the control center via Internet, and holding of the goods at the quality assurance stage by the service provider;
 - comparison of the engineering data with a standard specification by the control center;

transferring of a confirmation message to the service provider via the Internet by the control center if the engineering data conforms to the standard specification;
transferring of a fail message to the service provider by the control center if the engineering data does not conform to the standard specification;
shipping of the goods by the service provider after the confirmation message is received; and
performing of a recovery measure on the goods by the service provider if the fail message is received.

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or reasonably suggest at least the features/limitations emphasized above in claim 16. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 16 is in condition for allowance. Insofar as claims 19 and 20 are dependent claims that incorporate the features of claim 16, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other features that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 21, that claim has been amended to recite:

21. A quality assurance system, comprising:
 - a contractor having a sequence of process stages and a quality assurance stage, to perform a plurality of test processes on at least one wafer at the process stages, transfer engineering data corresponding to the wafer after the processes, and hold the wafer at the quality assurance; and
 - an IC (integrated circuit) foundry coupled to the service provider via Internet to receive the engineering data, compare the engineering data with a standard specification, transfer a confirmation message to the contractor if the engineering data conforms to the standard specification, and transfer a fail message to the contractor if the engineering data does not conform to the standard specification, such that ***the contractor ships the wafer after the confirmation message is received and performs a recovery measure on the wafer if the fail message is received.***

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or reasonably suggest at least the features/limitations emphasized above in claim 21. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 21 is in condition for allowance. Insofar as claims 24 - 26 are dependent claims that incorporate the features of claim 21, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other features that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

With respect to claim 27, that claim has been amended to recite:

27. A quality assurance method for use between a contractor and an IC (integrated circuit) foundry, in which the contractor has a sequence of process stages and a quality assurance stage, comprising the steps of:
performing of a plurality of test processes on at least one wafer at the process stages by the contractor;
transferring of engineering data corresponding to the wafer after the processes to the IC foundry via Internet, and holding of the wafer at the quality assurance stage by the contractor;
comparison of the engineering data with a standard specification by the IC foundry;
transferring of a confirmation message to the contractor via the Internet by the IC foundry if the engineering data conforms to the standard specification;
transferring of a fail message to the contractor by the IC foundry if the engineering data does not conform to the standard specification;
shipping of the wafer by the contractor after the confirmation message is received; and
performing of a recovery measure on the wafer by the contractor if the fail message is received.

(Emphasis Added).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or reasonably suggest at least the features/limitations emphasized

above in claim 27. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 27 is in condition for allowance. Insofar as claims 30 - 32 are dependent claims that incorporate the features of claim 27, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims also are in condition for allowance. Additionally, these claims recite other features that can serve as an independent basis for patentability.

Cited Art of Record


The cited art of record has been considered, but is not believed to affect the patentability of the presently pending claims.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this Amendment and Response to Restriction Requirement. If, however, any fee is believed to be due, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to deposit account No. 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Daniel R. McClure, Reg. No. 38,962

Thomas, Kayden, Horstemeyer & Risley, LLP
100 Galleria Pkwy, NW
Suite 1750
Atlanta, GA 30339
770-933-9500